CHAPTER 7
TACTICAL ENABLING OPERATIONS

This chapter covers tasks the platoon may conduct to complement or support its primary mission. Enabling operations include reconnaissance, retrograde (withdrawal, delay, and retirement), special purpose operations (linkup, stay-behind, relief in place, and passage of lines), and security. Squads and platoons conduct these operations on their own or as part of a larger force to set conditions for future operations or support the current operations of their higher headquarters. The planning, preparation, and execution for these operations are just as important and require the same level of detail as conducting defensive or offensive operations. These operations are conducted mounted, dismounted, or a combination of both.

7-1. RECONNAISSANCE

Reconnaissance is any mission undertaken, using visual observation or other methods, to seek out and obtain information regarding the activities and resources of enemy forces or the physical characteristics of a particular area. Successful reconnaissance is a focused collection effort aimed at gathering timely, accurate information about the enemy and the terrain in the area of operations. With the assets available to the SBCT, reconnaissance should result in near real-time situational updates. A focused collection effort by the RSTA squadron, the battalion reconnaissance platoon, and the companies should provide the squad and platoons with the critical information needed to conduct operations. Every leader is responsible for conducting reconnaissance to gain the information needed, and they should ensure the effort is synchronized as part of the higher headquarters effort. The platoon may conduct other reconnaissance operations to gather information for higher headquarters. (For a more detailed discussion of reconnaissance operations, refer to FM 3-21.94 (draft), FM 7-92, FM 17-95, and FM 3-90.)

a. **Reconnaissance Planning.** Before an operation, the company commander determines what he must know about the enemy. The commander must first request the information needed from the next higher headquarters. If they cannot provide or gather the information needed, they will authorize the commander to send a reconnaissance element forward (METT-TC dependent). For example, the commander may send an element to reconnoiter a choke point the night before the attack. At this point, the commander's intent for reconnaissance is now integrated into the battalion reconnaissance plan, which is critical to the operation. This ensures that each portion of the focused effort is aware of the other parts, thereby reducing possible duplication of effort or fratricide.

b. **Reconnaissance.** The platoon may conduct reconnaissance before or after an operation in the following situations:

- Reconnaissance by a quartering party of an assembly area and the associated route to it.
- Reconnaissance (leader's reconnaissance) from the assembly area to and in the vicinity of the LD before an offensive operation.

- Reconnaissance by rifle squads to probe enemy positions for gaps open to attack or to infiltration.
- Reconnaissance by rifle squads to observe forward positions and to guide elements to key positions on the battlefield such as support or assault positions.
- Reconnaissance by rifle squads to locate bypasses around obstacle belts or to determine the best locations and methods for breaching operations.
- Reconnaissance by rifle squads of choke points or other danger areas in advance of the remainder of the company.
- Reconnaissance (leader's reconnaissance) of defensive positions or engagement areas for conducting the defense.
- Reconnaissance by mounted or dismounted rifle squads as part of security operations to secure friendly obstacles, to clear possible enemy OPs, or to cover areas not observable by stationary OPs.

NOTE: Chapter 10 further discusses reconnaissance as part of patrolling.

7-2. LINKUP OPERATIONS

Linkup entails the meeting of friendly ground forces (or their leaders or designated representatives). It may occur in, but is not limited to, the following situations:

- Advancing forces reaching an objective area previously secured by friendly forces.
- Units conducting coordination for a relief in place.
- Cross-attached units moving to join their new organization.
- A unit moving forward during a follow and support mission with a fixing force.
- A unit moving to assist an encircled force.
- Units converging on the same objective during the attack.
- Units conducting a passage of lines.
- Units conducting reconnaissance forward of the main body.

Digital and OTN equipment enhance execution of linkup operations and reduce the likelihood of fratricide by use of night vision devices and the battlefield combat identification system (BCIS).

a. **Steps of the Linkup Operation.** The platoon conducts linkup activities independently or as part of a larger force. The platoon may lead the linkup force. The linkup consists of three steps:

(1) ***Step 1. Far Recognition Signal***. The units or elements involved in the linkup establish communications before they reach direct fire range. The lead element of each linkup force monitors the radio frequency of the other friendly force. FBCB2-equipped units also may achieve far recognition through displayed icons and digital messages.

(2) ***Step 2. Coordination***. Before initiating movement to the linkup point, the forces must coordinate necessary tactical information including the following:

- The known enemy situation.
- Type and number of friendly vehicles.
- Disposition of stationary forces (if either unit is stationary).

- Routes to the linkup point and rally point (if used).
- Fire control measures.
- Near recognition signal(s).
- Communications information.
- CS coverage.
- CSS responsibilities and procedures.
- Finalized location of the linkup point and rally point (if used).
- Any special coordination such as covering maneuver instructions or requests for medical support.
- Visual linkup signals or alternate locations for linkup due to contact.

(3) ***Step 3. Movement to the Linkup Point and Linkup***. All units or elements involved in the linkup must enforce strict fire control measures to help prevent fratricide. Linkup points and restrictive fire lines (RFL) must be recognizable by moving or converging forces. Linkup elements take these actions:

- Conduct far recognition digitally or by FM radio.
- Conduct short-range (near) recognition using the designated signal.
- Complete movement to the linkup point.
- Establish local security at the linkup point.
- Conduct additional coordination and linkup activities as necessary.

b. **Planning Considerations.** When planning a linkup, the platoon leader follows standard troop-leading procedures. During the planning process the units use digitization to transfer information and ensure the use of common graphics between the two units conducting the linkup. Both units exchange digital graphics before the actual linkup.

(1) The ICV's equipment allows for constant position or location updating between elements conducting the linkup operation to aid in navigation and to prevent fratricide. For example, the moving squad or vehicle can monitor the location of the stationary unit and linkup site using the position updates and digital graphics displayed on the CTD or LWS. Likewise, the stationary unit can monitor the moving unit's location as it moves along the prescribed route to the linkup point. As the moving force closes on the linkup site the stationary force is aware of its location, reducing the possibility of fratricide. The moving unit does the same type of monitoring to reduce fratricide potential.

(2) Once the moving unit arrives close to the linkup location, the stationary unit should challenge it. For example, the stationary unit can give the moving unit a series of flashes using an infrared source during limited visibility. The moving force responds with a pre-coordinated number of flashes.

(3) The challenge and password may also be accomplished digitally or with audible sounds.

(4) OTN equipment enhances linkups conducted during limited visibility. Infrared lights are used to aid in the linkup and as recognition signals. For example, the unit manning the linkup point can string a Phoenix infrared codable light, flashing infrared bike light, or black light tube lights high in a tree or on a piece of distinguishable terrain to help guide the moving unit to the linkup site. This is particularly advantageous when the moving unit has difficulty finding the linkup site due to bad weather or restrictive terrain. Both units must know the capabilities of the enemy, and they must exercise caution when using infrared devices against an enemy with night vision capability.

(5) Aviation units are helpful in linkup operations, possibly reducing most fratricide concerns. Observation helicopters can assist in the initial coordination between the forces to be linked up. Attack or observation helicopters can assist in route reconnaissance and provide early warning of enemy locations. Aviation also can extend the range of communications.

7-3. PASSAGE OF LINES

A passage of lines entails movement of one or more units through another unit. This operation becomes necessary when the moving unit(s) cannot bypass the stationary unit and must pass through it. The primary purpose of the passage is to maintain the momentum of the moving elements. A passage of lines may be designated as either forward or rearward.

The controlling company is responsible for planning and coordinating a passage of lines involving the platoon. In some situations, as when the platoon is using multiple passage routes (such as a separate route for each squad or section), the platoon leader must take responsibility for planning and coordinating each phase of the operation.

a. **Planning Considerations.** In planning passage of lines, the platoon leader must consider the following tactical factors and procedures:

(1) The passage should facilitate transition to follow-on missions through the use of multiple lanes or lanes wide enough to support doctrinal formations for the passing units.

(2) Deception techniques, such as the use of smoke, may be employed to enhance security during the passage.

(3) The controlling commander must clearly define the battle handover criteria and procedures to be used during the passage. His order should cover the roles of both the passing unit and the stationary unit and the use of direct and indirect fires. If necessary, he also specifies the location of the battle handover line (BHL) as part of the unit's graphics control measures. For a forward passage, the BHL is normally the LD for the passing force. In a rearward passage, it is normally a location in direct fire range of the stationary force. In general, a defensive handover is complete when the passing unit is clear and the stationary unit is ready to engage the enemy. Offensive handover is complete when the passing unit has deployed and crossed the BHL.

(4) The passing and stationary units coordinate obstacle information including the location of enemy and friendly obstacles, existing lanes and bypasses, and guides for the passage.

(5) Air defense coverage is imperative during the high-risk passage operation. Normally, the stationary unit will be responsible for providing air defense, thus allowing the passing unit's air defense assets to move with it.

(6) Responsibility for CSS actions, such as vehicle recovery or casualty evacuation in the passage lane, must be clearly defined for both passing and stationary units.

(7) To enhance command and control during the passage, the platoon will collocate a command and control element, normally the platoon leader or platoon sergeant, with a similar element from the stationary or moving unit.

b. **Reconnaissance and Coordination.** Detailed reconnaissance and coordination are critical in a passage of lines, both in dealing with the planning factors outlined previously and in ensuring the passage is conducted quickly and smoothly. The platoon leader normally conducts all necessary reconnaissance and coordination for the passage.

At times, he may designate the platoon sergeant or squad leader to conduct liaison duties for reconnaissance and coordination. The following items of information are coordinated:

- Unit designation and composition including type and number of passing vehicles and soldiers.
- Passing unit arrival time(s).
- Location of attack positions or assembly areas (should be confirmed by reconnaissance).
- Current enemy situation.
- Obstacles.
- Stationary unit's mission and plan (to include OP, patrol, and obstacle locations).
- Location of movement routes, contact points, passage points, and passage lanes.

NOTE: The use of GPS or POSNAV waypoints will simplify this process and speed the passage.

- Guide requirements.
- Order of march.
- Anticipated actions on enemy contact.
- Requirements for supporting direct and indirect fires, including the location.
- Nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) conditions.
- Available CS and CSS assets and their locations.
- Communications information (to include frequencies, digital data, and near and far recognition signals).
- Criteria for battle handover and location of the BHL.

c. **Forward Passage of Lines.** In a forward passage, the passing unit first moves to an assembly area or an attack position behind the stationary unit. Designated liaison personnel move forward to link up with guides and confirm coordination information with the stationary unit. Guides lead the passing elements through the passage lane.

(1) The platoon conducts a forward passage by employing tactical movement. It moves quickly, uses appropriate dispersal and formations whenever possible, and keeps radio traffic to a minimum.

(2) The platoon holds its fire until it passes the BHL or designated fire control measure unless the commander has coordinated fire control with the stationary unit. Once clear of passage lane restrictions, the unit consolidates at a rally point or attack position and conducts tactical movement in accordance with its orders.

d. **Rearward Passage of Lines.** Because of the increased risk of fratricide during a rearward passage, coordination of recognition signals and fire restrictions is critical.

(1) The passing unit contacts the stationary unit while it is still beyond direct fire range and conducts coordination as discussed previously. Near recognition signals and location of the BHL are emphasized. Additional fire control measures, such as RFLs, may be employed to further minimize the risk of fratricide.

(2) Following coordination, the passing unit continues tactical movement toward the passage lane. Gun tubes are oriented on the enemy, and the passing unit is responsible for

its security until it passes the BHL. If the stationary unit provides guides, the passing unit may conduct a short halt to link up and coordinate with them.

(3) The passing unit moves quickly through the passage lane to a designated location behind the stationary unit.

7-4. RELIEF IN PLACE

A relief in place occurs when one unit is replaced by another unit to preserve the combat effectiveness of committed units during offensive or defensive operations. In a relief involving the platoon, the company commander directs when and how the operation will be conducted.

a. **Planning Considerations.** In planning a relief in place, the platoon leader--

- Issues a FRAGO.
- Uses an advance party composed of key leaders to conduct detailed reconnaissance and coordination.
- Adopts the outgoing unit's normal pattern of activity as much as possible.
- Determines when the platoon will assume responsibility for the outgoing unit's position.
- Collocates platoon headquarters with the relieved unit's headquarters.
- Maximizes operations security (OPSEC) to prevent the enemy from detecting the relief operation.
- Plans to transfer excess ammunition; wire; petroleum, oil, and lubricants (POL); and other material of tactical value to the incoming unit.
- Controls movement by reconnoitering, designating, and marking routes and providing guides.

NOTE: Whenever possible, conduct the relief during daylight hours if not under enemy observation but if in contact, conduct under limited visibility.

b. **Coordination.** The incoming and outgoing leaders must meet to exchange tactical information, conduct a joint reconnaissance of the area, and complete other required coordination for the relief. The two leaders must address passage of command and jointly develop contingency actions for enemy contact during the relief. This process will normally include coordination of--

- Location of vehicle and individual fighting positions (to include hide, alternate, and supplementary positions).
- Enemy situation.
- The outgoing unit's tactical plan, to include graphics, platoon and squad fire plans, and individual vehicles' sector sketches.
- Fire support coordination, including indirect fire plans and the time of relief for supporting artillery and mortar units.
- Types of weapon systems being replaced.
- Time, sequence, and method of relief.
- Location and disposition of obstacles and the time responsibility will be transferred.
- Supplies and equipment to be transferred.

- Movement control, route priority, and placement of guides.
- Command and signal information
- Maintenance, logistical support, and evacuation, if necessary, for disabled vehicles.
- Limited visibility considerations.

NOTE: The relief will be conducted on the communications nets of the outgoing unit.

(1) During this coordination, units exchange graphics digitally to reduce time and increase accuracy; they also exchange sector sketches at this time. Transferring digital information does not relieve the leader of physically coordinating between units.

(2) Since a relief in place is often conducted during hours of limited visibility, the use of OTN equipment may speed the operation. Units follow prescribed SOPs to mark positions and routes with infrared lights to facilitate the occupation of or withdrawal from the position. For example, the platoon can mark routes and positions with the Phoenix, four- and eight-foot black light tube lights, infrared chemical lights, the remote black light, or black light post lights. These marking signals should be incorporated into the platoon leader's SOP. Additionally, digitally equipped units also may use the CTD and precision navigation system to move to and away from the position as explained in linkup operations discussed previously.

c. **Conduct of the Relief.** The outgoing leader retains responsibility for the area of operations and the mission. He exercises operational control over all subordinate elements of the incoming unit while they complete their portion of the relief. Responsibility can pass to the incoming commander when all elements of the outgoing unit are relieved and adequate communications are established. Relief of individual elements can be conducted in one of two ways--

- By alternate element position. The relieving element occupies a position separate from the relieved element.
- By alternate vehicle or individual position. The relieving element occupies vehicle or individual fighting positions in the same BP as the relieved element.

There are two methods of relief: sequential (elements relieved one at a time) and simultaneous (all elements relieved at one time).

(1) ***Sequential***. This is the most time-consuming method. The relieving unit moves to an assembly area to the rear of the unit to be relieved. Subordinate elements are relieved one at a time, in any order, with the relief generally following this sequence:

(a) The outgoing and incoming units collocate their headquarters and trains elements to facilitate command and control and transfer of equipment, ammunition, fuel, water, and medical supplies.

(b) The first element being relieved (such as a squad) moves to its alternate fighting positions or BP while the relieving element moves into the outgoing element's primary position. The incoming element occupies individual fighting positions.

(c) Incoming and outgoing elements complete the transfer of equipment and supplies.

(d) The relieved element moves to the designated assembly area behind the position.

(e) Once each outgoing element clears the release point (RP) en route to its assembly area, the next relieving element moves forward.

(2) ***Simultaneous***. This is the fastest, but least secure, method. All outgoing elements are relieved at once, with the incoming unit normally occupying existing positions, including BPs and vehicle and individual fighting positions. The relief takes place in this general sequence:

(a) Outgoing elements move to their alternate BPs or vehicle and individual positions.

(b) Incoming elements move along designated routes to the outgoing elements' primary positions.

(c) Units complete the transfer of equipment and supplies.

(d) Relieved elements move to the designated unit assembly area

7-5. WITHDRAWALS

A withdrawal occurs when an element disengages from enemy contact to reposition itself for another mission. A platoon usually conducts a withdrawal as part of a larger force. As part of a company, a platoon may fall back with the main element (under pressure) or may be used as the detachment left in contact (DLIC) in a withdrawal not under pressure. This information applies whether or not the platoon is under pressure from the enemy. Regardless of employment, the platoon leader conducts his withdrawal in accordance with his higher commander's guidance. On receipt of the order to conduct a withdrawal, the platoon leader begins preparing his order based on his higher unit's FRAGO. He identifies possible key terrain and routes based on the higher unit's graphics and his map. He formulates and briefs his FRAGO to his squad leaders and VCs. When the withdrawal is executed, squad leaders and VCs ensure they are moving in accordance with the platoon leader's plan by monitoring position location updates in conjunction with their digital graphics.

a. **Withdrawal Not Under Pressure.** In this type of withdrawal, platoons normally serve as the DLIC or as part of the DLIC. A DLIC is used to deceive the enemy into thinking that the entire force is still in position. As the DLIC, the platoon--

- Repositions ICV sections, squads, and weapons to cover the company's withdrawal.
- Repositions a squad and an ICV in each of the other platoon positions to cover the most dangerous avenue of approach into the position.
- Continues the normal operating patterns of the company and simulates company radio traffic.
- Covers the company withdrawal with planned direct and indirect fires if the company is attacked during withdrawal.
- Withdraws by echelon once the company is at its next position. The ICV is specially suited for this purpose because of its protection, mobility, and organic weapon systems.

b. **Withdrawal Under Pressure.** If the platoon cannot prepare and position the security force, it conducts a fighting withdrawal. The platoon disengages from the enemy by maneuvering to the rear. Soldiers, squads, or ICV sections not in contact are withdrawn first to provide suppressive fire and to allow soldier, squad, or ICV sections in contact to withdraw.

c. **Disengagement.** Based on orders from the battalion commander, the company commander decides how long to retain defensive positions. The company may be

required to remain and fight as long as possible, or it may be required to disengage and displace to subsequent positions. A platoon, as part of a company, may disengage to defend from another battle position, to prepare for a counterattack, to delay, to withdraw, or to prepare for another mission.

(1) Fire and movement to the rear is the basic tactic for disengaging. All available fires are used to slow the enemy and allow platoons to move away. The company commander may move his platoons and mass fires to stop or slow the enemy advance before beginning the movement away from the enemy.

(a) A base of fire is formed to cover platoons or squads moving away from the enemy. One platoon or squad acts as the base of fire, delaying the enemy with fire or retaining terrain blocking his advance, while other platoons or squads disengage.

(b) Moving platoons or squads get to their next position and provide a base of fire to cover the rearward movement of forward platoons and squads.

(c) Fire and movement is repeated until contact with the enemy is broken, the platoons pass through a higher level base-of-fire force, or the platoons are in position to resume their defense.

(d) Tactics used by the platoon to disengage from the enemy differ according to how the platoon is deployed, the company commander's plan for disengagement, and other factors. The following actions apply in all cases:

- Maximum use is made of the terrain to cover rearward movement. ICVs or squads back out of position and move, keeping a terrain feature between the vehicle and the enemy.
- Rapid movement and effective base of fire enhance the mobility of the ICV and are key to a successful disengagement.

(2) Plans for disengagement may be part of any defensive plan. When squads are deployed, a plan for rapid remounting must be made.

(a) When the platoon employs the ICVs and rifle squads on separate positions, platoon remount points and routes to the remount points must be chosen and rehearsed. The platoon remount point can be near the rifle squad's position, near the ICV position, or between the two (Figure 7-1, page 7-10.)

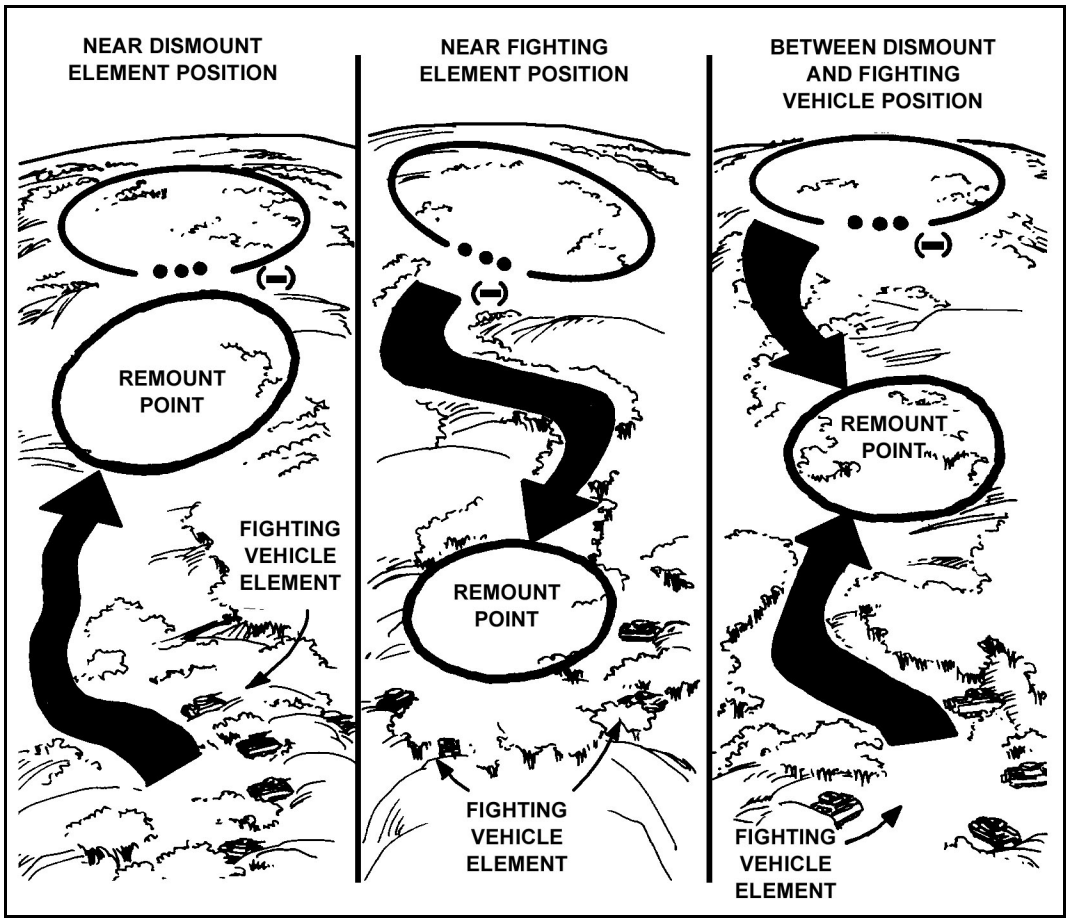

Figure 7-1. Platoon remount points.

(b) Covered positions for vehicles and rifle squads should be chosen to allow for easy remounting even during limited visibility in the remount point. Squad leaders must ensure their men know where the remount point is, where the vehicle is, and routes to the point. Routes to the remount point should be covered and should allow for speedy movement of both elements.

(3) When the squads and vehicle elements are separated, there are three ways the squads can disengage. Simultaneous disengagement (moving all teams at the same time) can be used if the element is covered by another force. When the squads must cover their own movement, they disengage by teams or by thinning the lines.

(a) When the squads simultaneously disengage, they assemble and move as one element to the remount point using proper movement techniques.

- Simultaneous disengagement is favored when rapid movement is critical, when the disengaging element is adequately covered by overwatching fires, when the enemy has not closed on the rifle squad or cannot fire effectively at it, or when there are obstacles to delay the enemy.
- Simultaneous disengagement can be used when the rifle squads can move before the enemy can close on the position because of an obstacle or the distance between the rifle squads and the enemy, or when other platoons of the company or battalion are adequately covering the disengagement.

(b) When the rifle squads must cover their own movement, two squads stay in position as a base of fire. The third squad and the weapons squad move to the rear. The squads left in position must fire into the entire element's sector to cover the movement of the other squad. Sectors of fire are adjusted for better coverage of the element's sector. The moving squad may displace by fire teams or as squads since there are two squads covering their movement. The squads left in position sequentially disengage. Movement to the rear by alternating squads continues until contact is broken. Once contact is broken, disengagement is complete and the rifle squads move to the remount point using proper movement techniques.

(c) When disengaging by thinning the lines, selected soldiers from each fire team (often one soldier from each fighting position) disengage and move to the rear (Figure 7-2). The soldiers still in position become the base of fire to cover the movement.

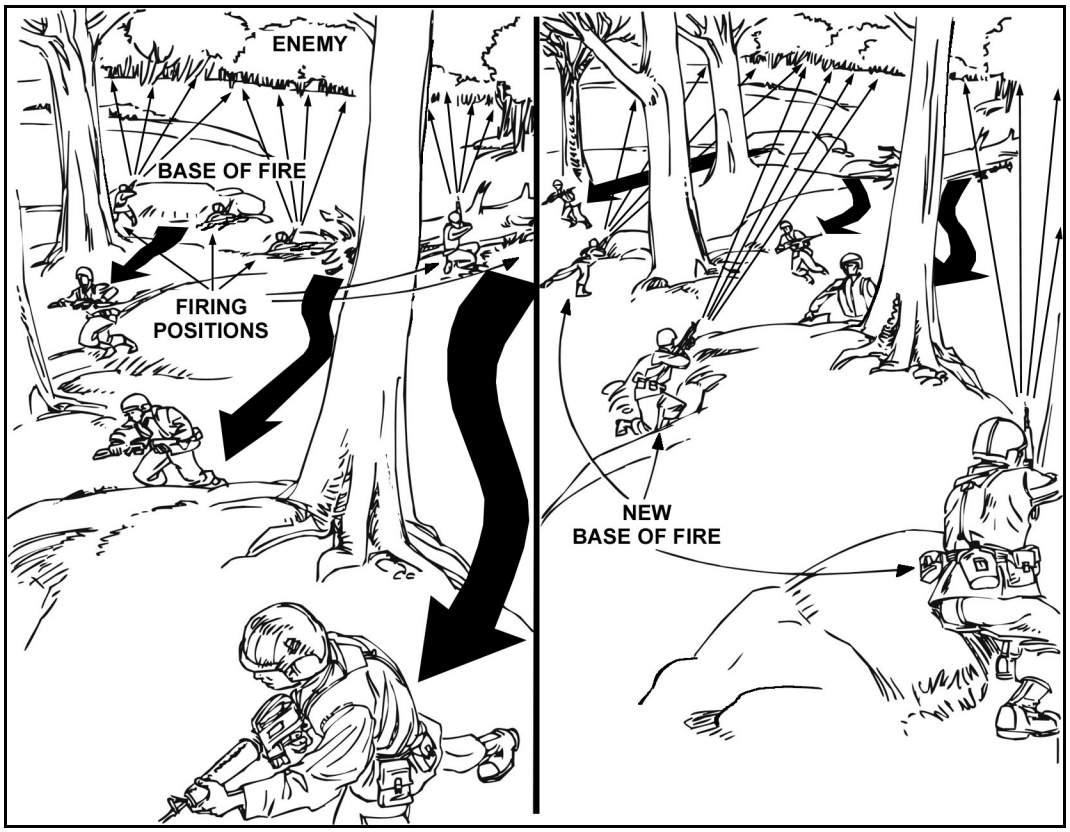

Figure 7-2. Disengagement by thinning the lines.

(d) When ICVs and squads are employed on the same position, the squads normally move to the remount point while the ICVs provide suppressive fire. The ICVs then quickly move to the remount point, link up with the infantry, load them, and move out. Squads use the disengagement techniques discussed previously. The method selected is dictated by the enemy situation, terrain, and the vehicle crew's ability to serve as a base of fire.

(4) Because of the ICV's speed and protection against small-arms fire and artillery shell fragments, it is usually best for the squads (when deployed) to disengage while covered by the ICVs. If the ICVs are not in a position to support the squads by fire or if

the squads are heavily engaged, the vehicle element may disengage first and move to a position to assist the squads in disengagement. Whichever method is used, there are two basic ways the vehicle element can disengage. If ICVs are covered by another force, simultaneous disengagement may be used. If ICVs must cover their own movement, they disengage by section. These methods are similar to those used by the squads.

(a) *Simultaneous Disengagement.* When ICVs disengage simultaneously, they move as a platoon as quickly as possible. This method normally is used when ICVs are covered by another force and speed is the most critical factor. If the squads are already mounted, the entire platoon moves, using movement techniques, to a position designated by the commander. If squads are deployed, ICVs move to the remount point to pick them up, or they may attack the enemy by fire from a new position to allow the fire teams to disengage.

(b) *Disengagement by Vehicle or Section.* When ICVs must cover their own disengagement, as many as three vehicles can be left in position as a base of fire while the remaining vehicles move to the rear. ICVs left in position must cover the entire sector until moving vehicles reach positions they can use to provide a base of fire.

7-6. DELAY

In a delay, the platoon forces the enemy to slow its movement by forcing him to repeatedly deploy for the attack. Before the enemy assault, the delaying force withdraws to new positions. The squads or sections and platoons disengage from the enemy as described in a withdrawal under pressure. Once disengaged, a platoon moves directly to its next position and defends again. The squads and platoons slow the advance of the enemy by causing casualties and equipment losses by employing--

- Ambushes.
- Snipers.
- Obstacles.
- Minefields (to include phony minefields).
- Artillery and mortar fire.

7-7. STAY-BEHIND OPERATIONS

Stay-behind operations can be used as a part of defensive or delay missions. In the defense, once the enemy's combat units have passed, his weakest point (CS and CSS units) can be attacked.

a. **Types.** The two types of stay-behind operations are unplanned and deliberate.

(1) ***Unplanned.*** An unplanned stay-behind operation is one in which a unit finds itself cut off from other friendly elements for an indefinite time without specific planning or targets and must rely on its organic assets.

(2) ***Deliberate.*** A deliberate stay-behind operation is one in which a unit plans to operate in an enemy-controlled area as a separate and cohesive element for a certain amount of time or until a specified event occurs. A deliberate stay-behind operation requires extensive planning. Squads and sections and platoons conduct this type of operation as part of larger units.

b. **Planning.** The troop-leading procedure applies to stay-behind operations. Planners must pay strict attention to the following.

(1) ***Task Organization.*** The stay-behind unit includes only the soldiers and equipment needed for the mission. It needs minimal logistics support and can provide its own security. It must be able to hide easily and move through restrictive terrain. ICVs may or may not be a part of the stay-behind forces.

(2) ***Reconnaissance.*** This is most important in a stay-behind operation. Reporting tasks and information requirements can include suitable sites for patrol bases, hide positions, OPs, caches, water sources, dismounted and mounted avenues of approach, kill zones, engagement areas, and covered and concealed approach routes.

(3) ***Combat Service Support.*** Because the stay-behind unit will not be in physical contact with its supporting unit, supplies of rations, ammunition, radio batteries, water, and medical supplies are cached. Provisions for casualty and EPW evacuation depend on the company and battalion plans. Although ICVs in the stay-behind forces have some advantages, they do cause some CSS planning problems.

7-8. AIR ASSAULT OPERATIONS

NOTE: Separating the infantry from their ICVs during air assault operations may limit their inter-networked communications and their knowledge of the changing situation.

SBCT infantry platoons may be required to participate in air assault operations as part of the tactical plan. The platoon has the ability to be air lifted as part of a larger operation. The battalion is the lowest level with sufficient personnel to plan, coordinate, and control an air assault operation. When company-size or lower operations are conducted, the planning takes place at battalion or higher headquarters. Successful air assault execution is based on a careful analysis of METT-TC factors and detailed, precise reverse planning. The basic plans that comprise the reverse planning sequence are developed for each air assault operation and include ground tactical plan, landing plan, air movement plan, loading plan, and staging plan. These plans normally are coordinated and developed by the battalion staff to make the best use of available time. If time is limited, planning steps may be compressed or conducted concurrently; detailed plans and orders may be SOPs or lessons learned in training. (Refer to FM 90-4 for more information.) Although not the highest priority training in an infantry battalion, air assault operations and mission tasks should be included in platoon training.

a. **Ground Tactical Plan.** The foundation of a successful air assault operation is the commander's ground tactical plan, around which subsequent planning is based. The ground tactical plan specifies actions in the objective area to accomplish the mission and addresses subsequent operations. The ground tactical plan contains essentially the same elements as any other infantry attack plan but capitalizes on speed and mobility to achieve surprise.

b. **Landing Plan.** The landing plan must support the ground tactical plan. This plan sequences elements into the area of operations to ensure that platoons arrive at designated locations and times prepared to execute the ground tactical plan.

c. **Air Movement Plan.** The air movement plan is based on the ground tactical and landing plans. It specifies the schedule and provides the instructions for air movement of soldiers, equipment, and supplies from pickup zones and landing zones.

d. **Loading Plan.** The loading plan is based on the movement plan. It ensures soldiers, equipment, and supplies are loaded on the correct aircraft. Platoon integrity is maintained when aircraft loads are planned. Cross loading of essential personnel and equipment is imperative to ensure survivability of command and control assets and to ensure that the mix of personnel and weapons arriving at the landing zone (LZ) is ready to fight. The platoon leader or squad leader should always ensure the aircraft is loaded so that dismounting soldiers react promptly and contribute to mission accomplishment. The platoon leader must have a bump plan. A bump plan ensures essential soldiers and equipment are loaded ahead of less critical loads in case of aircraft breakdown or other problems.

e. **Staging Plan.** The staging plan is based on the loading plan and prescribes the arrival time of ground units (soldiers, equipment, and supplies) at the pick up zone (PZ) in the order of movement. The staging plan includes the disposition of the vehicles left in the staging area and the platoon's linkup plan on return from the air assault mission.

(1) ***Disposition of Vehicles.*** The platoon leader must develop a security plan for the vehicles that remain in the staging area until the platoon returns to the LZ after the air assault mission is completed. This security plan can be as simple as a coil or herringbone formation for the platoon, or the platoon may be part of a company modified perimeter defense. Instructions for link up of the platoon with its vehicles will also be included.

(2) ***Linkup of Vehicles.*** The platoon leader's linkup plan must be just as detailed as the staging and loading plans. To simplify the linkup, the platoon leader must ensure that platoon integrity is maintained. The platoon leader or company commander should designate a linkup point for each element to link up with their vehicles. As the aircrafts land, the units immediately move to their linkup point to continue the mission.

7-9. AREA SECURITY OPERATIONS

Area security operations protect specific critical and vulnerable assets or terrain from enemy observation and direct fire. These operations can consist of escorting friendly convoys; protecting critical points such as bridges, command and control installations, or other key and vulnerable sites; or participating in protection of large areas such as airfields. During stability or support operations the platoon may be required to establish OPs, roadblocks, or checkpoints (CPs). The platoon normally performs an area security operation when conventional security or combat operations would not work. The platoon may perform area security operations as part of a larger force or as an independent platoon mission. SBCT infantry platoons normally conduct area security missions to protect high-value points, areas, or assets. Whether and how much protection a point, area, or asset requires (and the defensive technique chosen) depends on the factors of METT-TC. The platoon leader must integrate his elements into the overall security plan for the area he must protect. Area security operations rely on various techniques, which may include reconnaissance, security, defensive tasks, and offensive tasks.

a. When deploying for area security, the platoon generally moves into a coil formation around the point, area, or asset they must secure and dismounts the rifle squad and sets up a perimeter defense. Based upon the situation, the platoon leader integrates the ICV into the defense and places anti-armor weapons along likely enemy mechanized or armored avenues of approach.

b. To further improve the position, the platoon employs hasty protective minefields, wire, and other obstacles, as appropriate and available. It emplaces wire obstacles outside grenade range of friendly positions. Once it sets up vehicle positions and obstacles, the platoon develops a fire plan and submits the plan to higher headquarters. This plan includes integrated direct and indirect fires.

c. In addition to setting up the platoon position around the asset to be secured, the platoon also employs patrols and OPs to enhance security (Figure 7-3). Reconnaissance patrols and combat patrols define the area of operations, gain information on enemy forces, and destroy small dismounted enemy reconnaissance elements. The platoon deploys OPs to observe likely avenues of approach, to provide early warning of enemy activity, and to aid in control of indirect fires.

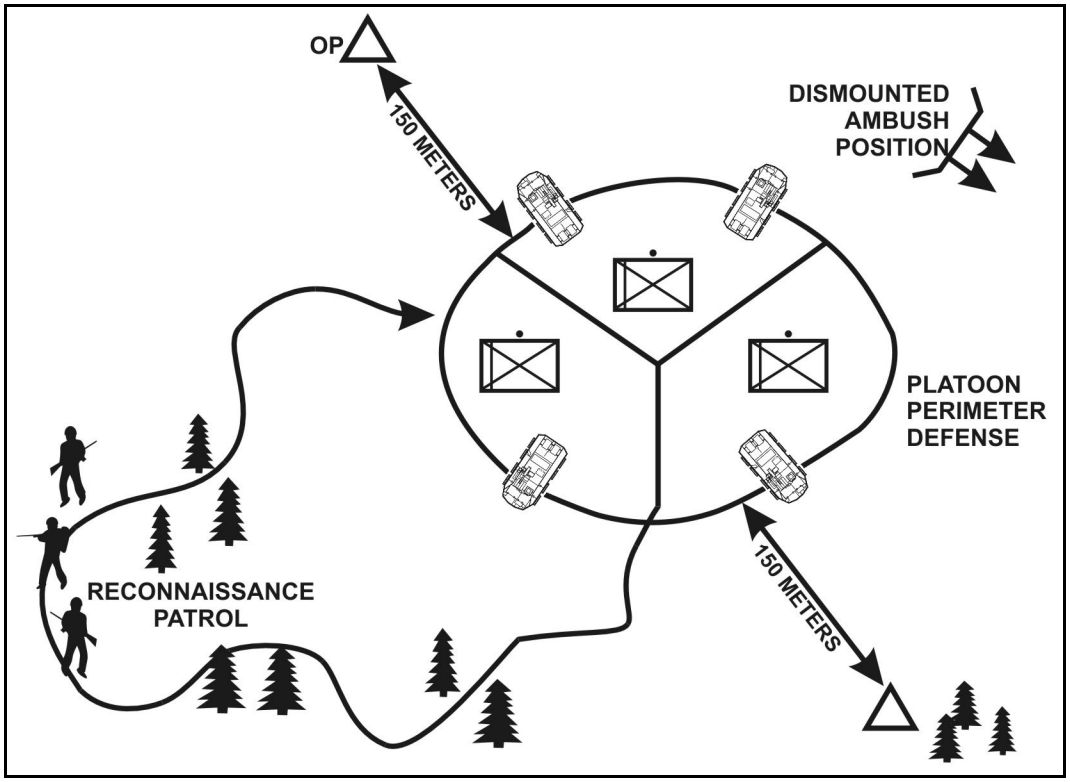

Figure 7-3. Platoon area security dispositions.

7-10. CONVOY AND ROUTE SECURITY

Company and larger organizations usually perform convoy or route security missions. Convoy security provides protection for a specific convoy. Route security aims at securing a specific route for a designated period of time, during which multiple convoys may use the route. These missions include numerous tasks (such as escort, reconnaissance, and combat reaction forces) that become missions for subordinate units. The size of the unit performing the convoy or route security operation depends on many factors including the size of the convoy, the terrain, and the length of the route.

a. **Route Reconnaissance.** In this mission, the platoon leader focuses on the route's trafficability and on enemy forces that might influence the route. The platoon must plan

to call for engineer assets to aid in breaching point-type obstacles. Command-detonated devices pose a major threat during route reconnaissance.

b. **Convoy Escort.** The platoon may perform a convoy escort mission either independently or as part of a larger unit's convoy security mission. The convoy escort mission requires that the platoon provide the convoy with limited close-in protection from direct small arms fire. Platoon vehicles include military CSS and C2 vehicles and civilian trucks and buses. Leaders must carefully evaluate the enemy before assigning a convoy escort mission to platoon-sized elements.

c. **Command and Control.** Because of the task organization of the convoy escort mission, command and control is especially critical. The relationship between the platoon and the convoy commander must provide unity of command and effort if combat operations are required during the course of the mission. In most cases, the platoon will execute the escort mission under the control of the security force commander, who is usually under operational control (OPCON) or attached to the convoy commander. It is vital that the convoy commander issues a complete OPORD to all convoy vehicle commanders before executing the mission because the convoy may itself be task-organized from a variety of units and some vehicles may not have tactical radios. The order should follow the standard five-paragraph OPORD format, but special emphasis should be placed on:

- Route of march (to include a strip map for each vehicle commander).
- Order of march.
- Actions at halts.
- Actions in case of vehicle breakdown.
- Actions on contact.
- Chain of command.
- Communications and signal information.

d. **Tactical Disposition.** During all escort missions, the convoy security commander and platoon leader must establish and maintain security in all directions and throughout the platoon. As noted, several factors, including convoy size, affect this disposition. The key consideration is whether the platoon is operating as part of a larger escort force or is executing the escort mission independently. Additional METT-TC considerations include the employment of ICVs by section and the employment of rifle squads during the mission (fire teams ride in ICVs or ride in escorted vehicles).

(1) ***Large-Scale Escort Missions.*** When sufficient escort assets are available, the convoy commander usually will organize the convoy into three distinct elements: advance guard, close-in protective group, and rear guard. Figure 7-4 shows a convoy in which the platoon is part of a company-size escort force.

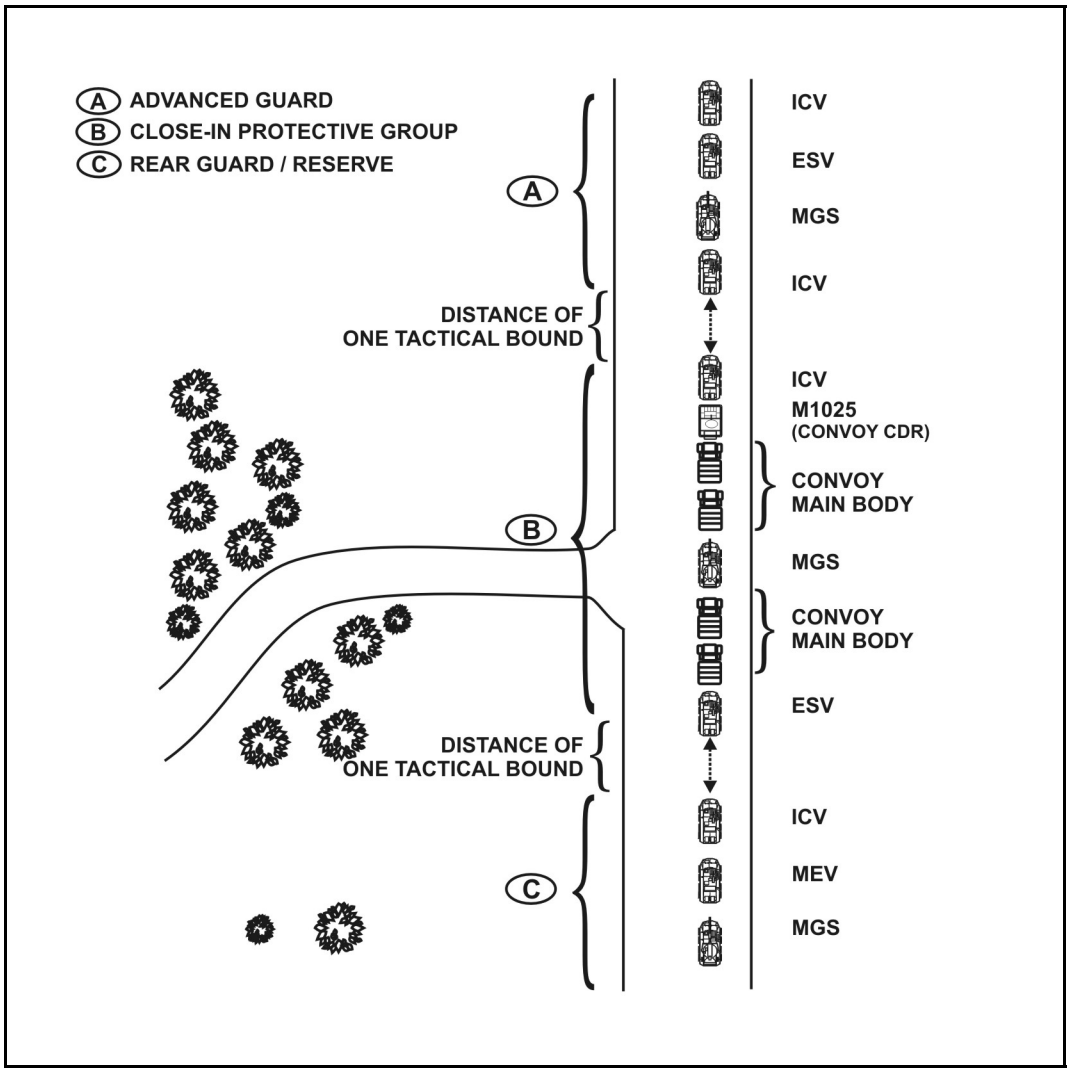

Figure 7-4. ICV platoon as part of larger escort force.

(a) The advance guard reconnoiters and proofs the convoy route. It searches for signs of enemy activity such as ambushes and obstacles. Within its capabilities, it attempts to clear the route, and it provides the convoy commander with early warning before the arrival of the vehicle column. In some cases, an individual platoon vehicle, a section, or the entire platoon may be designated as part of the advanced guard and may receive a tank with a mine plow or mine roller.

(b) The platoon normally will be task organized to operate within the close-in protective group. This group provides immediate, close-in protection for the vehicle column with escort vehicles positioned either in the column or on the flanks. The convoy commander's vehicle is located in this group.

(c) The rear guard follows the convoy. It provides security in the area behind the main body of the vehicle column, often moving medical and recovery assets. Again, an individual vehicle, a section, or the entire platoon may be part of this element.

NOTE: The convoy commander also may designate the rifle or MGS platoon as part of a reserve (reaction) force for additional firepower on enemy contact. The reserve will move with the convoy or be located at a staging area close enough to provide immediate interdiction against the enemy.

(2) ***Independent Convoy Escort.*** When the platoon executes a convoy escort mission independently, the convoy commander and platoon leader disperse the ICVs throughout the convoy formation to provide forward, flank, and rear security. Whenever possible, wingman ICVs should maintain visual contact with their leaders. Engineer assets, if available, should be located near the front to respond to obstacles. At times, engineer assets may be required to move ahead of the convoy with scouts to proof the convoy route. Figure 7-5 illustrates this type of escort operation. In some independent escort missions, variations in terrain along the route may require the platoon to operate using a modified traveling overwatch technique. Figure 7-6 depicts such a situation. It shows one section leading the convoy while the other trails the convoy. Dispersion between vehicles in each section is sufficient to provide flank security. Depending on the terrain, the trail section may not be able to overwatch the movement of the lead section.

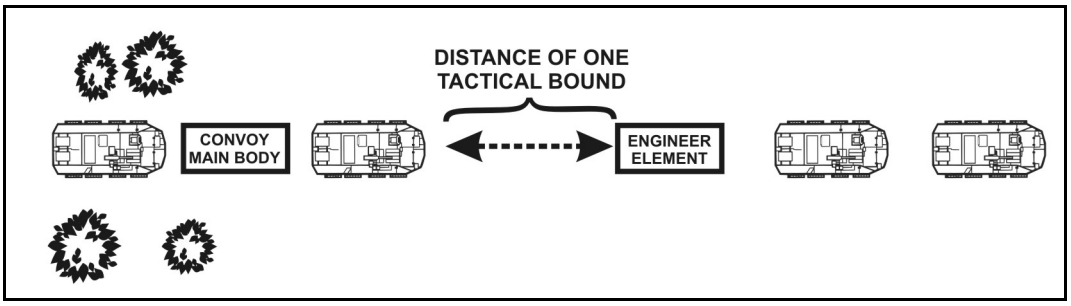

Figure 7-5. Platoon performing convoy escort independently.

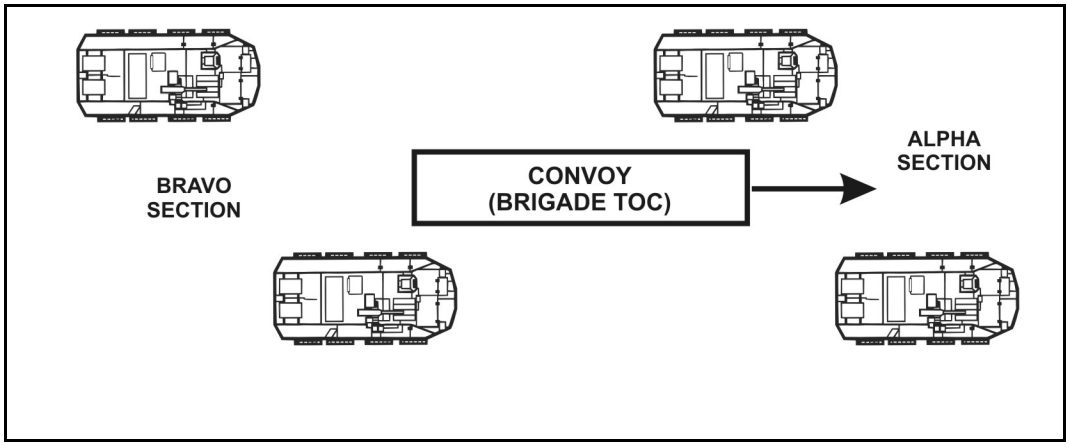

Figure 7-6. Platoon using modified traveling overwatch.

e. **Actions on Contact.** As the convoy moves to its new location, the enemy may attempt to harass or destroy it. This contact usually will occur in the form of an ambush, often with the use of a hastily prepared obstacle. The safety of the convoy rests on the speed and effectiveness with which escort elements can execute appropriate actions on

contact. Based on the factors of METT-TC, portions of the convoy security force, such as the platoon or an ICV section, may be designated as a reaction force. The reaction force performs its escort duties, conducts tactical movement, or occupies an assembly area, as required, until enemy contact occurs and the convoy commander gives it a reaction mission.

f. **Actions at an Ambush.** An ambush is one of the more effective ways to interdict a convoy. Reaction to an ambush must be immediate, overwhelming, and decisive. Actions on contact must be planned for and rehearsed so they can be executed quickly.

(1) In almost all situations, the platoon will take several specific, instantaneous actions when it reacts to an ambush. These steps, illustrated in Figure 7-7 and Figure 7-8 (page 7-20), include:

- As soon as they acquire an enemy force, the escort vehicles take action toward the enemy (Figure 7-8, page 7-20). They seek covered positions between the convoy and the enemy and suppress the enemy with the highest volume of fire permitted by the ROE. Contact reports are submitted to higher headquarters as quickly as possible.
- The convoy commander retains control of the convoy vehicles and continues to move them along the route at the highest possible speed (Figure 7-7).
- Convoy vehicles, if armed, may return fire only if the escort has not positioned itself between the convoy and the enemy force.
- The platoon leader or the convoy commander may request that any damaged or disabled vehicles be abandoned and pushed off the route (Figure 7-8, page 7-20).
- The escort leader (in the example included here this is the platoon leader) uses SPOTREPs to keep the convoy security commander informed. If necessary, the escort leader or the convoy security commander can request support from the reaction force and or call for and adjust indirect fires.

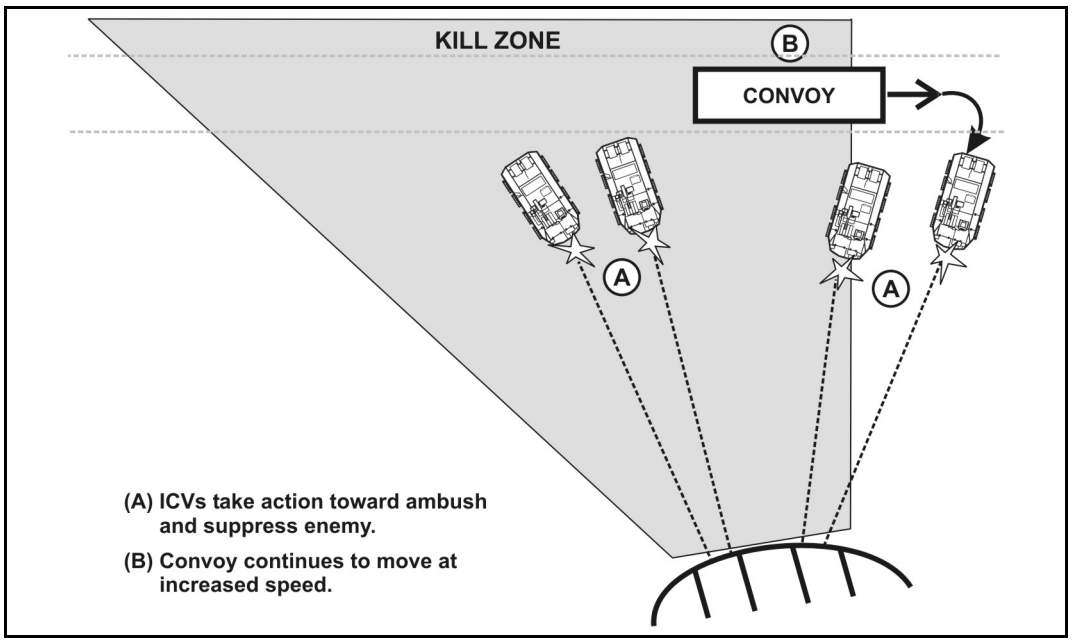

Figure 7-7. Convoy escort actions toward ambush.

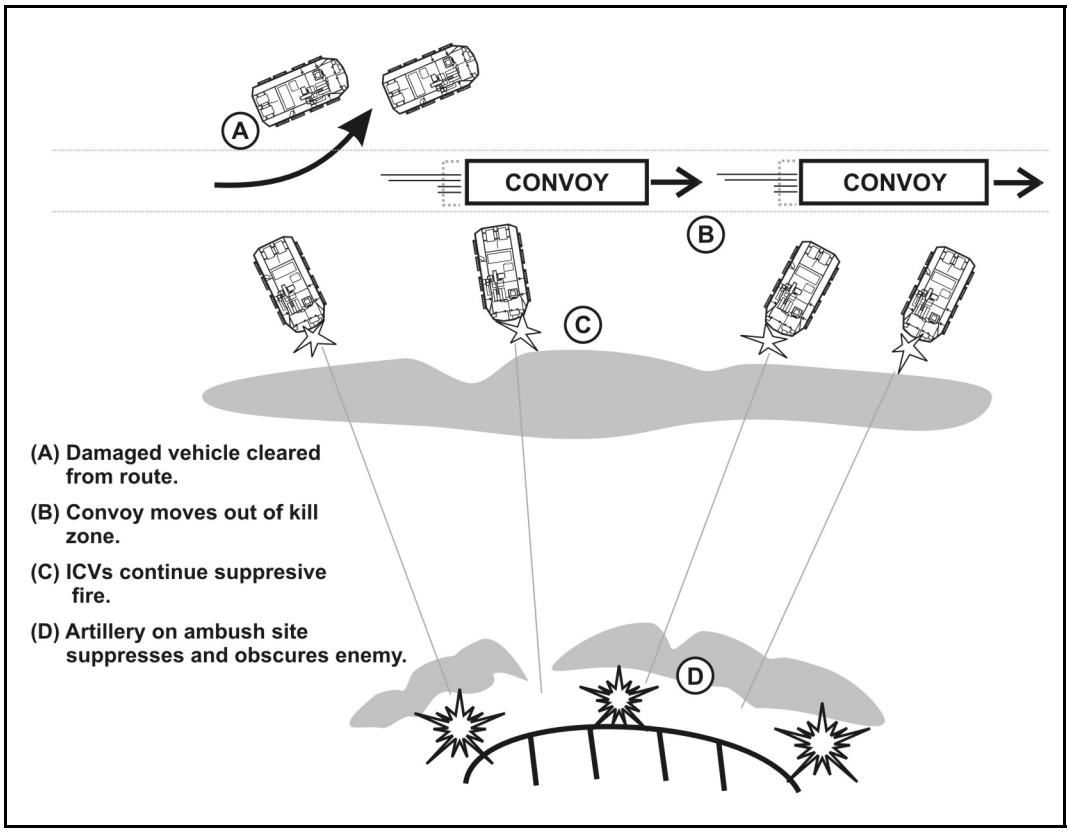

Figure 7-8. Convoy continues to move.

(2) Once the convoy is clear of the kill zone, the escort element executes one of the following courses of action:

- Continues to suppress the enemy as combat reaction forces move to support (Figure 7-9).
- Rifle squads assault the enemy (Figure 7-10).
- Breaks contact and moves out of the kill zone.

(3) In most situations, ICVs and rifle squads will continue to suppress the enemy or execute an assault. Contact should be broken only with the approval of the platoon's higher commander.

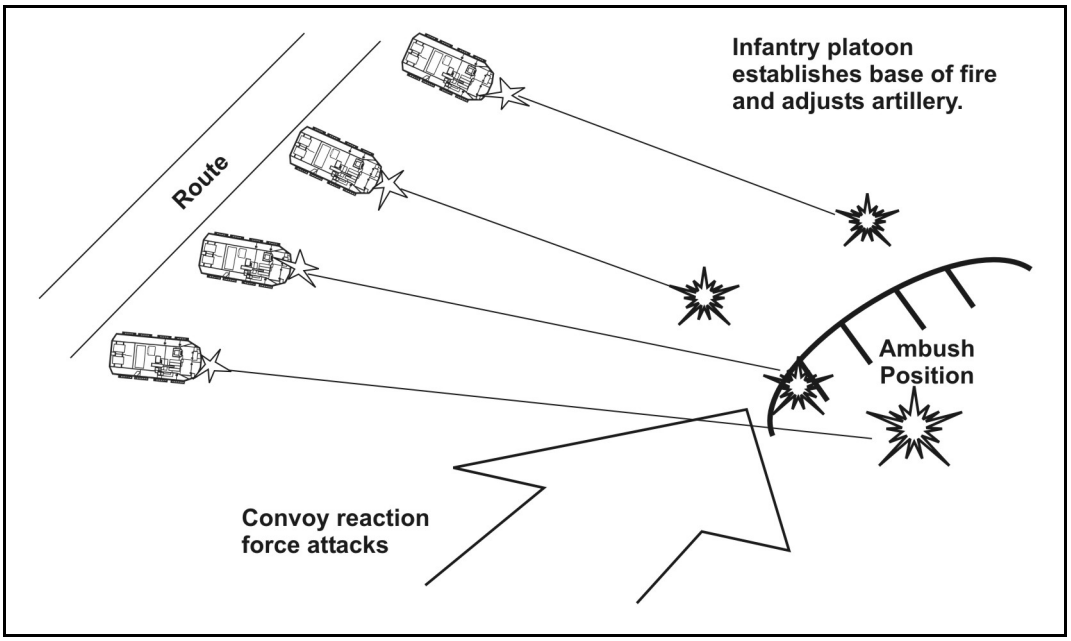

Figure 7-9. Escort suppresses ambush for reaction force attack.

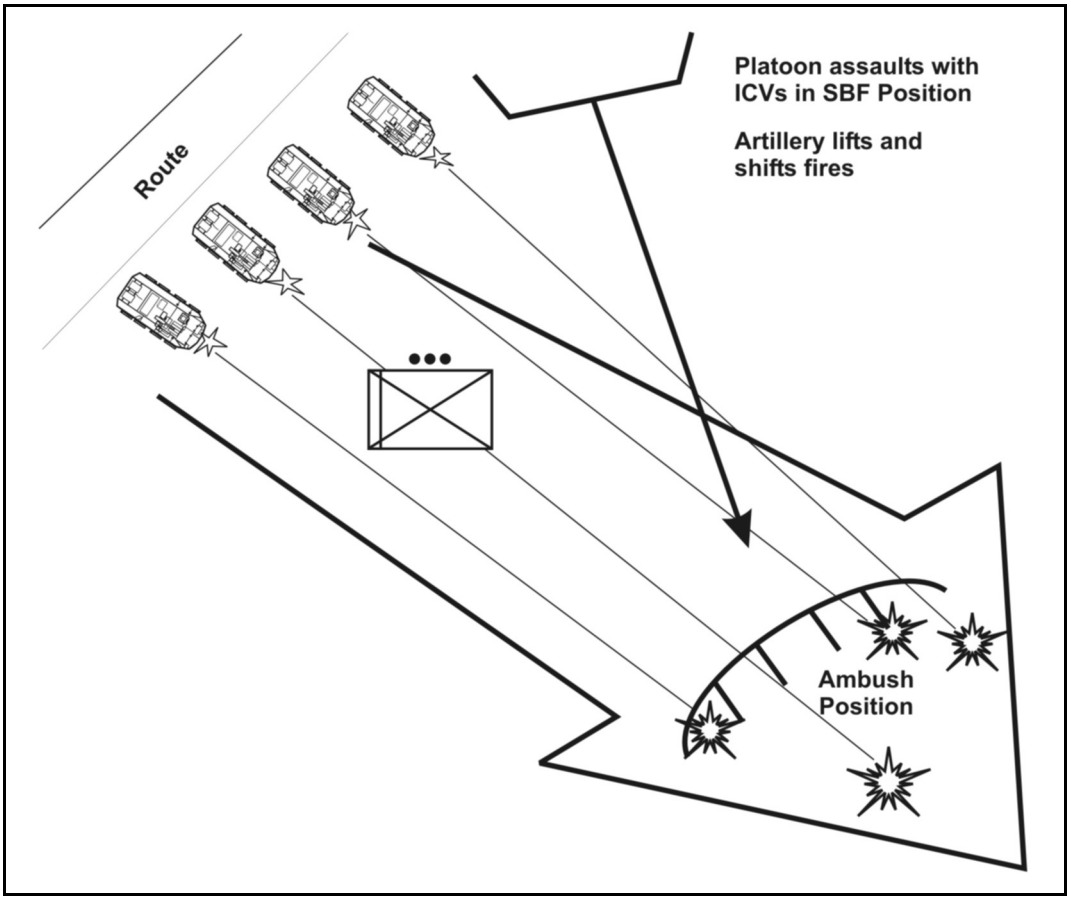

Figure 7-10. Escort assaults ambush.

g. **Actions at an Obstacle.** Obstacles are a major impediment to convoys. The purpose of reconnaissance ahead of a convoy is to identify obstacles and either breach them or find bypasses. In some cases the enemy or its obstacles may avoid detection by the reconnaissance element.

(1) Obstacles can be used to harass the convoy by delaying it. If the terrain is favorable, the obstacle may be able to stop the convoy altogether. Obstacles may canalize or stop the convoy to set up an enemy ambush. When an obstacle is identified, the convoy escort faces two problems: reducing or bypassing the obstacle and maintaining protection for the convoy. Security becomes critical, and actions at the obstacle must be accomplished very quickly. The convoy commander must assume that the enemy is covering the obstacle with direct- and indirect-fire weapon systems.

(2) To reduce the time the convoy is halted and to reduce its vulnerability, the following actions should occur when the convoy escort encounters a point-type obstacle:

- The lead element identifies the obstacle and directs the convoy to make a short halt and establish security. The convoy escort overwatches the obstacle (Figure 7-11) and requests the breach element force to move forward.
- The convoy escort maintains 360-degree security of the convoy and provides overwatch as the breach force reconnoiters the obstacle in search of a bypass.

(3) Once all reconnaissance is complete, the convoy commander determines which of the following courses of action he will take:

- Bypass the obstacle.
- Breach the obstacle with assets on hand.
- Breach the obstacle with reinforcing assets.

(4) The convoy security commander relays a SPOTREP and requests support by combat reaction forces, engineer assets (if they are not part of the convoy), and aerial reconnaissance elements. Artillery units are alerted to prepare to provide fire support.

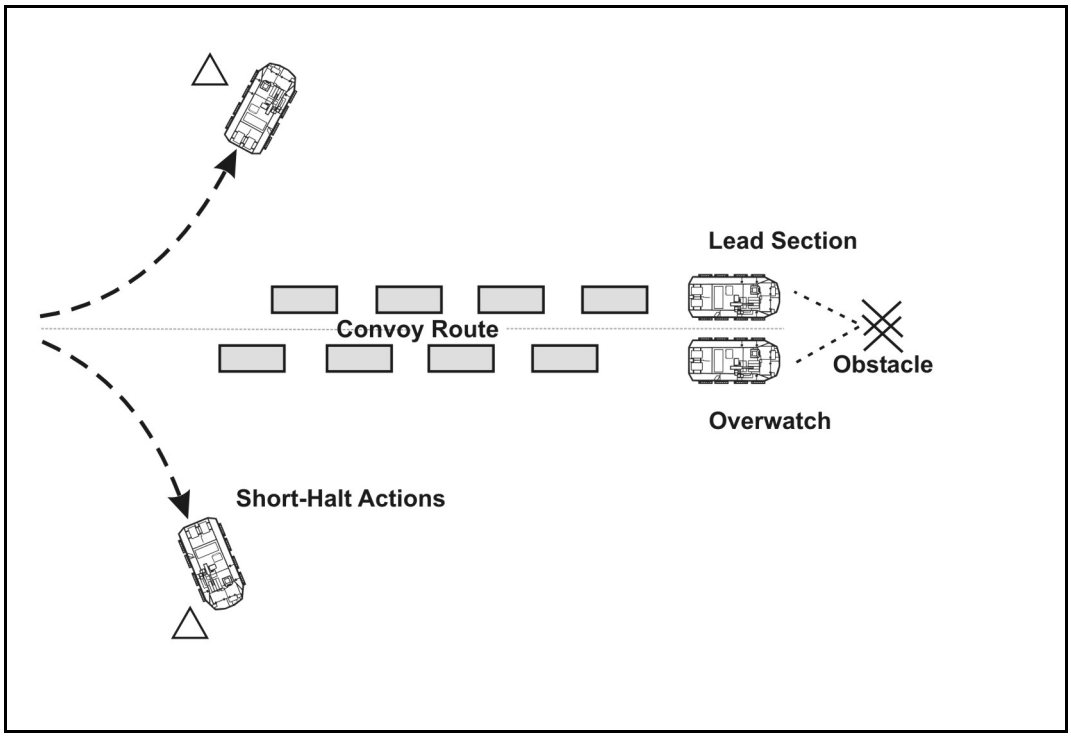

Figure 7-11. Convoy escort overwatches an obstacle.

h. **Actions During Halts.** During a short halt, the convoy escort remains alert for possible enemy activity. If the halt is for any reason other than an obstacle, the following actions should be taken:

- The convoy commander signals the short halt and transmits the order via tactical radio. All vehicles in the convoy assume a herringbone formation.
- If possible, escort vehicles are positioned up to 100 meters beyond the convoy vehicles that are just clear of the route (Figure 7-12, page 7-24). Escort vehicles remain at the ready, dismount the rifles squads as required, and establish local security.
- When the order is given to move out, convoy vehicles reestablish movement formation, leaving space for escort vehicles (Figure 7-13, page 7-24). Once the convoy is in column, local security elements (if used) return to their vehicles, and the escort vehicles rejoin the column (Figure 7-14, page 7-25).
- The convoy resumes movement.

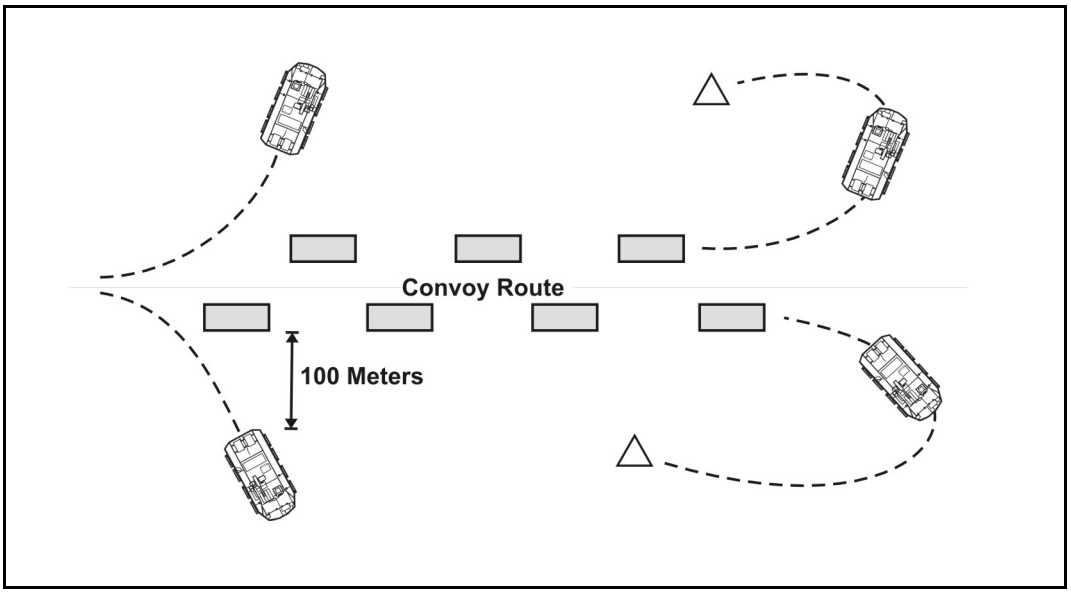

Figure 7-12. Convoy assumes herringbone formation.

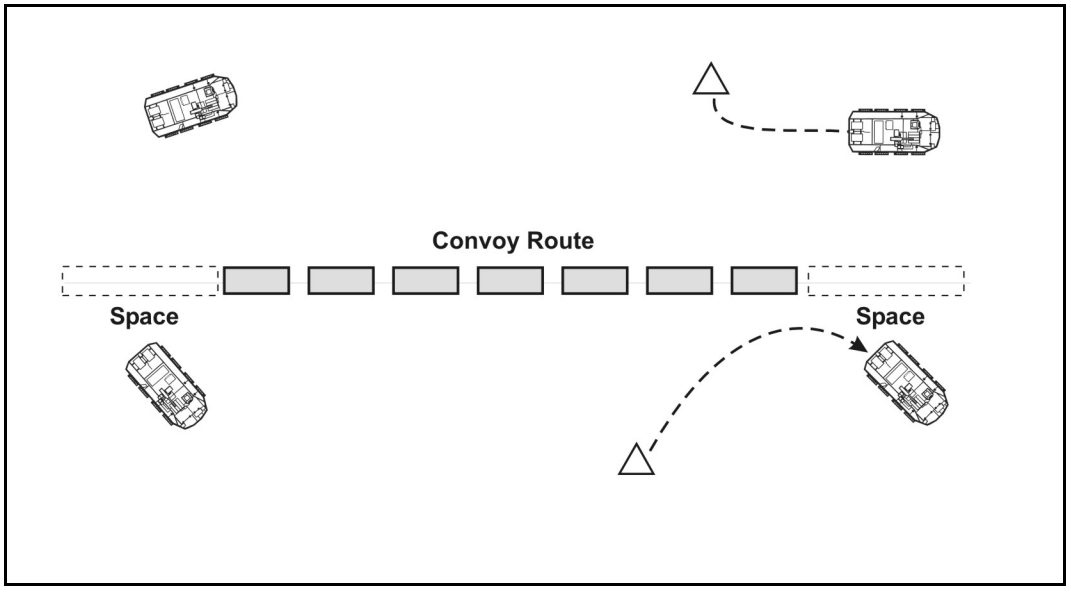

Figure 7-13. Convoy moves back into column formation.

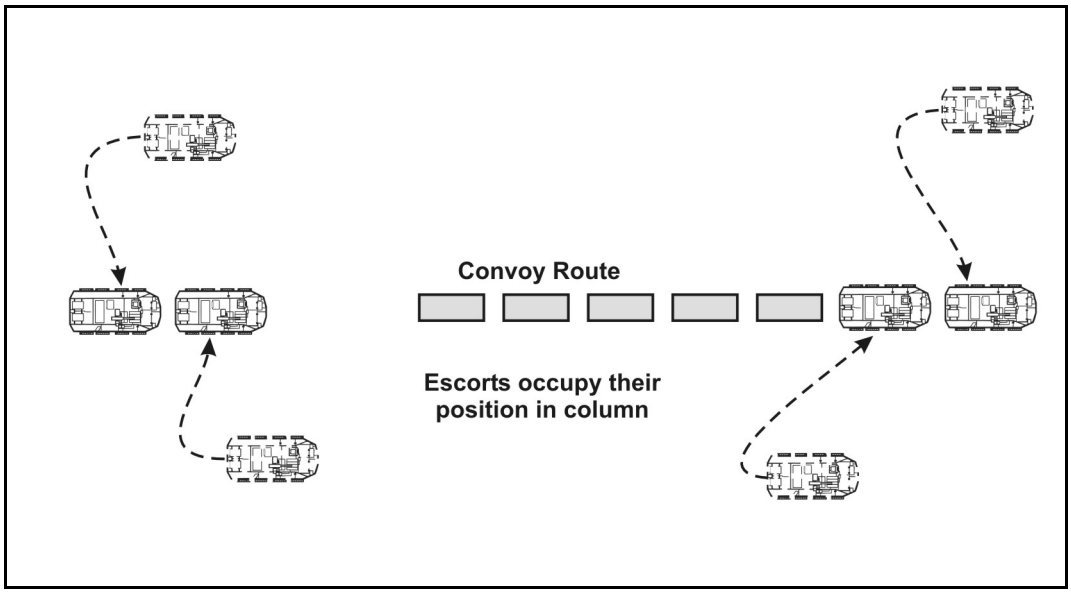

Figure 7-14. Convoy escort vehicles rejoin column.

7-11. CHECKPOINTS, ROADBLOCKS, AND OBSERVATION POSTS

Construction and manning of checkpoints, roadblocks, and observation points are high-frequency tasks for an infantry company and subordinate elements when they must establish area security during stability operations.

- Checkpoints. A CP is a predetermined point used as a means of controlling movement, such as a place where military police check vehicular or pedestrian traffic, to enforce circulation control measures and other laws, orders, and regulations. (Figure 7-15, page 7-27, shows an example of a deliberate CP.)
- Roadblocks. A roadblock is used to limit the movement of vehicles along a route or to close access to certain areas or roads. Checkpoints and roadblocks can be either deliberate or hasty with the primary difference being the extent of planning and preparation conducted by the establishing force.
- Observation Posts. An OP is a position from which military observations are made or fire directed and adjusted and which has appropriate communications. They are both overt (conspicuously visible, unlike their tactical counterparts) and deliberately constructed. Observation posts are similar in construction to bunkers and are supported by fighting positions, barriers, and patrols.

a. **Purposes.** The platoon may be directed to establish a CP, roadblock, or OP for the following reasons.

- To show a military presence to all parties and to the population in the area.
- To survey all activity in the terrain, along roads, and in inhabited areas.
- To check and or inspect and register all personnel and vehicles in and out of the controlled area.
- To survey airspace, coastal areas, airfields, cease-fire lines, and borders.
- To deter illegal movement.
- To create an instant roadblock.
- To control movement into the area of operations or on a specific route.

- To prevent smuggling of contraband.
- To enforce the terms of peace agreements.
- To ensure proper use of routes by both civilian and military vehicles.

b. **Planning and Establishing.** The layout, construction, and manning of CPs, roadblocks, and OPs should reflect the factors of METT-TC, especially the time available for emplacing them. The layout of a deliberate CP can be found in FM 3-90.1 (71-1). The following procedures and considerations may apply:

- Position the CP or roadblock where it is visible and where traffic cannot turn back, get off the road, or bypass without being observed.
- Position a combat vehicle off the road, but within sight, to deter resistance to soldiers manning the CP. The vehicle should be in a hull-down position and protected by local security. It must be able to engage vehicles attempting to break through or bypass the CP.
- Place obstacles in the road to slow or canalize traffic into the search area.
- Establish a reserve.
- Establish wire communications in the CP area to connect the CP bunker, the combat vehicle, the search area, security forces, the rest area, and any other elements involved in the operation.
- Designate the search area. If possible, it should be below ground to provide protection against such incidents as the explosion of a booby-trapped vehicle. Establish a parking area adjacent to the search area.
- If applicable, CP personnel should include linguists.
- Establish an early warning system around the perimeter of the OP (trip flares, empty cans, dry branches, and so on).
- Prepare shelters and defensive positions.

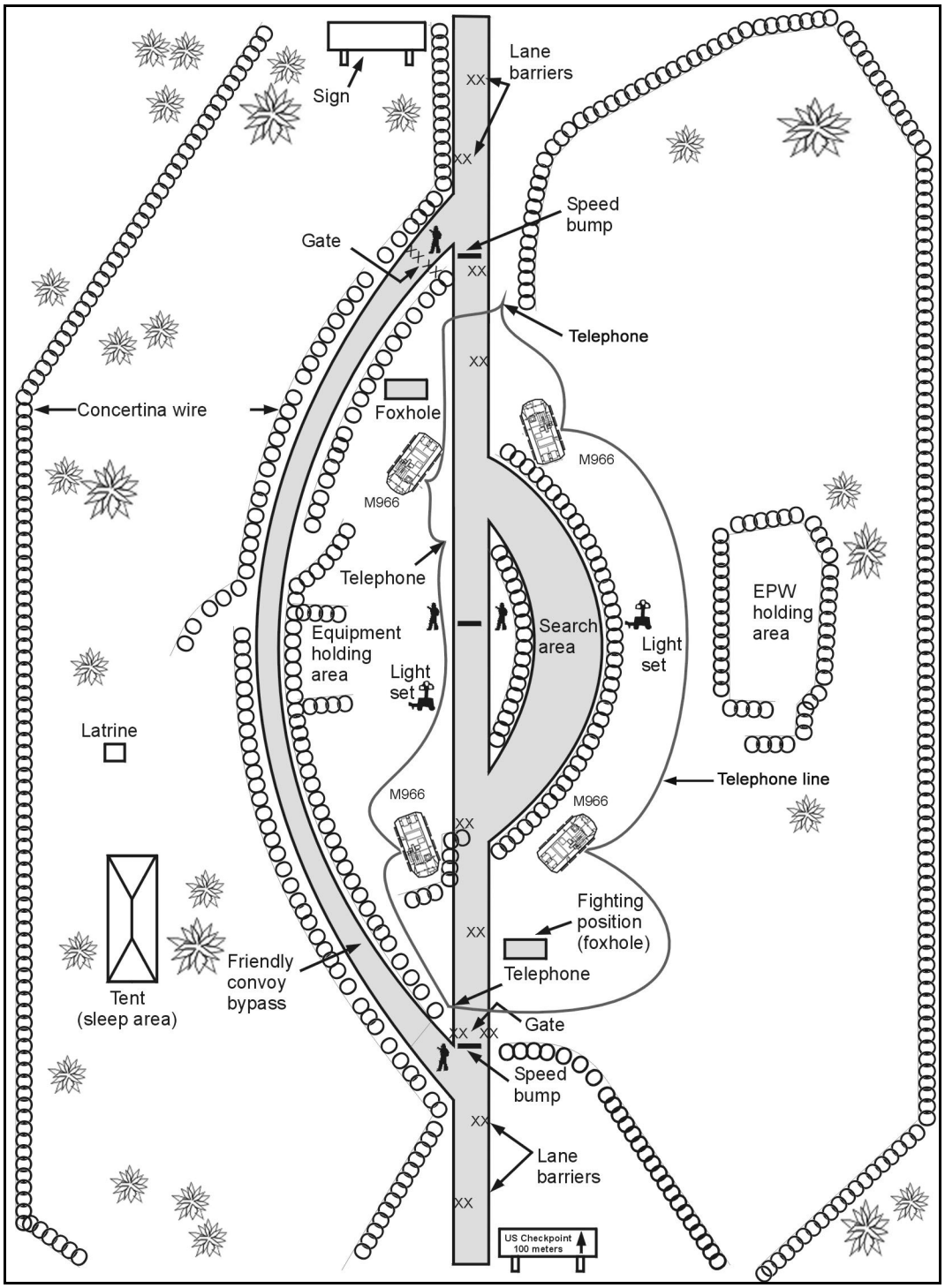

Figure 7-15. Example of a deliberate CP.

c. **Manning Observation Posts and Checkpoints.** When manning OPs and CPs proper order and a systematic approach must be emphasized. Personnel must behave so that no misunderstanding occurs. The personnel manning the CP must be in complete control of the surrounding terrain.

(1) Although the OP is usually manned on a 24-hour basis, it may be manned only by day or night. During darkness, at least two persons must be in the OP position--one observes while the other is resting. In remote areas, or if the situation in the area is tense, more personnel man the OP for security and observation.

(2) A minimum of two soldiers should man the CP, depending on traffic and the general situation. One soldier examines people and vehicles; the other soldier covers the area where people and vehicles are checked. The soldier covering the other area is armed and has easy access to radio and telephone. If more soldiers are manning the CP, one of them should be ready to set up obstacles to stop vehicles trying to force their way through the CP.

d. **Communications.** All OPs and CPs are connected to their unit or directly to the battalion operations center by radio and telephone. A spare radio and batteries should be supplied to the OP and CP, especially to remote OPs located in dangerous areas. Radio and telephone checks are carried out at least twice every 24 hours (three times is recommended). Special code words must be prepared for use in certain situations. Conversation must be coded. Reserve frequencies must be available. OPs and CPs of great operational value may be connected by direct landline to ensure rapid coordination in urgent situations.

e. **Equipment.** Many items are used to reinforce a roadblock, CP, or OP.

(1) Some of the recommended equipment includes:

- Barrels filled with sand, water, or heavy concrete blocks (emplaced to slow and canalize vehicles).
- Concertina wire (emplaced to control movement around the CP).
- Secure facilities for radio and wire communications with the controlling headquarters.
- First aid kit or a medic if available.
- Sandbags for defensive positions.
- Bunker construction material.
- Binoculars, night vision devices, and or flashlights.
- Long-handled mirrors (used to inspect vehicle undercarriages).
- Signs stating the speed limit into and out of the CP. (The text of these signs must be written in English and the local language.)

(2) Elements manning a deliberate CP may require access to specialized equipment such as:

- Floodlights.
- Duty log.
- Flag and unit sign.
- Barrier pole that can be raised and lowered.
- Generators with electric wire.

f. **Control.** During periods in which the civilian administration is not functioning, refugees will be traveling routinely throughout the area. All soldiers participating in these operations must fully understand the procedures for appropriately identifying personnel and for controlling personnel and vehicles moving through their AO.

(1) ***Personnel Identification.*** People who have permission to enter a sector are regulated by special instructions to the patrol conducting the operation. Often local and civilian employees, mayors, and chiefs of tribes in villages in the AO are given special

identification (ID) cards and may pass without being checked. These special ID cards must be registered. The primary reasons for checking people will be for identification and to prevent illegal items being brought into the AO through the CP. Personnel must identify themselves with an ID card, passport, and so on. Such ID cards are written in the local language. Examples of different ID cards must be kept in the CP.

(2) ***Personnel Control***. Personnel control is conducted in different ways. Soldiers manning the CP should watch for people acting strangely or with bulging clothing. If there is a danger of car bombs, special attention should be paid to cars containing only one person. When conducting body searches, soldiers should feel along clothes and not just pat them. Special attention must be paid to the lower parts of the back and from the shoes up to the knees. Armpits also must be checked. The wide trousers used by some cultures should be carefully examined. Soldiers also should check boots and hats.

(3) ***Checking Women and Clerical Personnel.*** Making a body search of women and clerical personnel is often difficult in Moslem countries and may lead to strong reactions. The commander must thoroughly discuss this with mayors and other leaders, and the procedure used must be consistent with agreements and treaties. Women usually are only checked with a metal detector. Elderly women often may remain in the vehicle during inspection of a car. If there is a suspicion that the "rules" are being misused, then other and better checks must be made. The battalion commander makes these decisions